Safety level of Centrally-protected monuments

988. SHRI G.K. VASAN: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the safety levels of Centrally-protected mounments in Delhi against lightning strikes; and

(b) the steps taken to improve the standard of lightning conductors?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) The lightning conductors are installed at centrally-protected monuments like Humayun's Tomb, Safdarjung Tomb, Qutb Minar and Qila-i-Kuhna Mosque at Purana Qila in Delhi.

(b) As a safety measure, the C.P.W.D. authorities have been requested to conduct necessary tests of existing lightning conductors and also to provide new lightning conductors at some other important monuments.

Setting up of National Culture Fund

†989. SHRI LAJPAT RAI:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have setup a National Culture Fund;

(b) if so, the total amount deposited in this fund upto March, 2003;

(c) whether Government have decided to spend money from this fund to develop and safeguard the culture of our country; and

(d) if so, the norms adopted to provide loan, grant and other kind of economic assistance from this fund?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) (i) Govt. contribution : Rs. 7.01 crores

(ii) Private contribution (donations) : Rs. 2.86 crores

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) Yes, Sir. The Govt. has decided to spend money out of the interest accured on Corpus Fund to safeguard and develop the culture of our country.

(d) It has been decided to spend an amount equal to the amount contributed by a private sponsor for a cultural project. However, other proposals which do not have a private sponsor are decided upon by the Governing Council of the National Culture Fund.

Financial assistance to Shri Bismillah Khan

†990. PROF. RAM DEO BHANDARY: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Internationally renowned Shehnai Player, Shri Bismillah Khan is ill and his economic position is also very deplorable;

(b) whether Government have considered to provide him treatment and financial assistance; and

(c) if so, the immediate and permanent scheme to provide assistance to Shri Khan?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) There have been media reports to this effect.

(b) and (c) Ustad Bismillah Khan has been honoured by the Sangeet Natak Akademi with the Akademi Award as well as the Akademi Fellowship. Awardees and Fellows of Sangeet Natak Akademi are covered under a Medical Insurance scheme by which they can claim up to Rs. 1 lakh per annum for hospitalisation- expenses. Besides, Prime Minister has sanctioned Rs. 2 lakhs as relief to Ustad Bismillah Khan. State Governments of Uttar Pradesh and Punjab have also offered financial assistance of Rs. 5 lakhs each.

Amendment to the antiquities and Arts Treasures Act, 1972

991. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:
SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.